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## Ideological Attitudes in the US-China Diplomatic Spat over COVID-19: A Synergy of Socio-Cognitive Approach and Appraisal Theory

A B S T R A C T

The outbreak of the Covid-19 has caused diplomatic discrepancies between the US and China. Therefore, this paper offers an exploration of how the appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005) might be operationalized critically and linguistically with the socio-cognitive approach (2011) inspired by van Dijk. These theories are interrelated to make the analysis of the ideological attitudes over Covid-19 outbreak among the high-ranking administration more explicit. The researcher thus qualitatively scrutinizes the statements used by US and Chinese officials in tweets and press conferences during March 2020 to identify the factors motivating the use of knowledge, attitudes, power and deep-rooted ideologies which underlie this war of words. The results of this research show that Donald Trump tactfully used language to accomplish his political objectives. The researcher thus concludes that Donald Trump has promoted racist ideologies that discriminate against Chinese individuals through the depiction of Covid-19 as 'Chinese Virus'. This is evident in the ideological structures of his coronavirus-related press conferences and tweets. Although neither country (China or the USA) has yet been able to provide sufficient evidence to determine the origin of the virus, China has been largely accused of delaying the release of information. What's more, it is found that the speeches made by official leaders have been significantly influenced by their sociocultural and sociopolitical backgrounds.

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## المواقف الأيديولوجية في الخلاف الدبلوماسي بين الولايات المتحدة والصين بشأن

## COVID-19 : تأزر بين النهج الاجتماعي المعرفي ونظرية التقييم

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الملخص:

تسبب تفشي فيروس Covid-19 في تناقضات دبلوماسية بين الولايات المتحدة والصين. لذلك ، تقدم هذه الورقة استكشافاً لكيفية تفعيل نظرية التقييم التي وضعها مارتين ووايت (2005) بشكل نقدي ولغوي من خلال النهج الاجتماعي المعرفي (2011) المستوحى من فان ديك. ترتبط هذه النظريات ببعضها البعض لجعل تحليل المواقف الأيديولوجية حول تفشي Covid-19 بين الإدارة رفيعة المستوى أكثر وضوحاً. وهكذا يقوم الباحث بتدقيق نوعي في البيانات التي استخدمها المسؤولون الأمريكيون والصينيون في التغريدات والمؤتمرات الصحفية خلال مارس 2020 لتحديد العوامل المحفزة لاستخدام المعرفة والمواقف والسلطة والأيديولوجيات العميقة الجذور التي تكمن وراء هذه الحرب الكلامية. تظهر نتائج هذا البحث أن دونالد ترامب استخدم اللغة بلباقة لتحقيق أهدافه السياسية. وهكذا يستنتج الباحث أن دونالد ترامب روح للأيديولوجيات العنصرية التي تميز ضد الأفراد الصينيين من خلال تصوير Covid-19 على أنه "الفيروس الصيني". يتضح هذا في الهياكل الأيديولوجية لمؤتمراته الصحفية وتغريداته المتعلقة بفيروس كورونا. على الرغم من عدم تمكن أي من البلدين (الصين أو الولايات المتحدة) من تقديم أدلة كافية لتحديد أصل الفيروس ، فقد اتهمت الصين إلى حد كبير بتأخير نشر المعلومات. علاوة على ذلك ، فقد وجد أن الخطاب التي ألقاها القادة الرسميون قد تأثرت بشكل كبير بخلفياتهم الاجتماعية والثقافية والاجتماعية السياسية.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On December 2019, a type of pneumonia resulted from SARS-CoV-2 is diagnosed by World Health Organization (WHO) as a new kind of coronavirus that quickly spread across the globe and considered as a highly infectious disease. Consequently, WHO declared the rampant of Covid-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Thus, the Covid-19 outbreak has become one of the most notorious events of the decade, if not the current century.

Many countries worldwide such as USA and China have been hardest hit by the outbreak, using strong rhetoric around the virus resulting in a debate which reignited diplomatic tensions between the two countries. This kind of debate in the form of war of words over Covid-19 intensified on Monday, March 16, 2020 after the Chinese embassy in France suggested the virus actually started by the American soldiers who participated in Wuhan military ceremony. Official spokesmen of United States and China are engaged in a tense debate over China's response to Covid-19. Consequently, this diplomatic spat was escalated by Trump and his administrators by naming Covid-19 as "the Chinese virus." For its part, the Officials of the United States of America Trump, who has heaped blame on China for the global pandemic, blamed Beijing squarely as the virus was first appeared in Wuhan city last year, and of not being sufficiently straightforward and of not being transparent enough.

The language of the mutual accusation and blame over the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and its origin between United States of America and China diplomatic spat will be

studied from critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) perspective and appraisal theory in which the speakers' deep-rooted ideologies can be revealed through analysing the linguistic features. In this sense, the adoption of the critical approach is employed in this study to show how discourse structures and ideological structures are interrelated. In addition, the appraisal theory is an efficacious device to be deployed in the analysis of discourse to highlight the interpersonal processes which have an essential position in CDA agenda research.

Eventually, the following questions are going to be answered in this paper:

1. What are macrostructures (topics) that evoked by the US-China officials in the selected discourses?
2. What are the microstructures i.e., the linguistic elements such as syntax, lexicons, evidentiality, metaphor, rhetorical devices, actor and level description used in the selected discourses?
3. How is ideology revealed in the selected discourses?
4. How are the attitudes reflected in the selected discourses?

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Van Dijk's (2011) Socio-Cognitive Approach

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach contends that the connection between discourse and society is mediated through cognition. This cognitive mediation has a role in grasping the connection between social structures and discourse structures. Although these types of structures are of a different nature, they can be associated by the mental representation of language users as individuals and as social members (van Dijk, 2009, p.78). Thus, socio-cognitive approach has a **Discourse-Cognition-Society** triangle. Each component will be described below.

#### 2.1.1 Cognitive component

Traditionally, 'cognition' was generally understood as being 'consciousness', which is both vague and abstract term. Within sociocognitive theory, cognition is said to include both 'model' in episodic memory (referring to personal knowledge and beliefs about specific circumstances, events, and experiences) and "systems of group knowledge, attitudes, norms, and ideologies, represented in 'semantics' or rather 'social' memory". Each cognitive system can be represented differently with certain discursive contents and structures. Likewise, cognitive and social uses require different cognitive strategies. So, cognitive processes can be described at the macro-level of analysis, and can be reproduced, acquired, confirmed or changed through the micro-level (van Dijk, 1991, p.35).

Cognitive structures involve the following points which stated below:

- 1- **Memory:** memory is the space in which cognitive processes are located or stored. It consists of Working Memory (WM) or Short-Term Memory (STM) and Long-Term Memory (LTM). Whereas LTM contains memories of autobiographical experiences and knowledge preserved in Episodic Memory (EM), Semantic Memory (SM) store more common, socially transmitted knowledge, attitudes and ideologies.

- 2- **Mental models:** Our personal memories are interpreted as personal, distinctive, individual mental models, preserved in Episodic Memory, after being processed in Working Memory. These mental models have a hierarchy structure of “a spatiotemporal Setting, Participants (and their identities, roles and relations), Actions/Events, and Goals.” In the semantic structures of the sentences which defines such experiences and categories often prevail.
- 3- **Social cognition:** cognition not only includes personal mental models, there are different socially shared cognitions. Individuals of the same community share generic and abstract knowledge of the world. Attitudes and even fundamental ideologies can be shared by all members of social group. Even personal mental models are interpreted, construed and represented in accordance to the forms of social cognition. Thus, personal mental models and those of other members in the same community are alike. Lastly, “these crucial features of human cognition allow cooperation, interaction and communication, and hence discourse.” (van Dijk, 2015, p.66-67).

In this way, cognition is given in terms of processes and representations as stored in the memory of language users. These processes and representations are personal and unique in the sense that they vary according to the communicative contexts and language users themselves. Hence, discourses are different even when produced in the same social situations. Language users use the same sociocultural repertoire of knowledge in different ways. At the same time, the knowledge about discourse rules is socially shared one, which helps making mutual understanding possible. Social actors share norms, beliefs and rules of interaction with other members of their group, as well as social representations, such as knowledge and beliefs (van Dijk, 1997, p.17).

Therefore, van Dijk (2014, p.3) suggests to distinguish between ‘personal’ and ‘social’ cognition. Individuals produce and interpret discourse(s) in a subjective way through personal cognition, based on their "socially shared representations" (social cognition). Whereas personal cognition is understood in terms of knowledge and mental models, social one is reflected in attitudes and ideologies.

### 2.1.2. Personal cognition

Personal cognition can be defined as the “ways individual language users, as members of linguistic, epistemic and social communities, subjectively produce and understand text and talk.” Though this type is conveyed in terms of individual’s mental structures and processes, it depends basically on representations shared among members of different social collectivities. Such representations are triggered, implemented and adapted to the properties of continuous and situated social interaction and communication from which they are first and foremost acquired, modified and transmitted socially. Thus, they are interrelated (van Dijk, 2014, p.3).

Thus, personal cognition is usually referred to in terms of mental modals. They refer to the way events and situations are subjectively represented in Episodic or Autobiographical Memory (EM). Personal experiences whether past or ongoing are stored there. Observing, participating, reading or hearing about an event, individuals continuously construe a mental model of that event. A mental model is used to produce a meaningful discourse of an event. Likewise, such discourse helps in constructing or changing the mental model of the event.

Transmission of the mental model of speakers/writers is the primary communicative purpose of most discourses. Hearers/readers, still, in terms of their own mental model, create their own, potentially different 'interpretation' of such discourse (van Dijk, 2018, p.30).

Mental models are of two types: **Event model** or (Semantic model) and **Context model** or (Pragmatic model). When language users create a mental representation of event and situations that they speak of, write, learn or hear about, they are constructing the semantic model. However, they also create a mental model about the communicative situation in which they are constantly involved; these mental models are called context models. With these models, individuals ensure that, in the communicative situation, their discourses, speech acts and interactions are perfectly adequate. Thus, the individuals who participated and involved in ongoing interaction can understand the social situation and this reflects the context model (van Dijk, 2018, p.31).

Van Dijk (2014, p.4) states that event models "account for what in philosophical terms is called aboutness, that is, the 'intentional' or representational aspect of language use." Context models, on the other hand, signify the features of the communicative situation, and the social parameters of language use that the participants believe to be relevant. These parameters refer to indexicals, that is, "deictic expressions referring to the time, place, participants and action of the communicative situation, as well as the appropriate conditions of speech acts." (van Dijk, 2014, p.6).

Mental models represent the interface between discourse and society, where discourse structures are similar to mental models' structures. However, they are different in the sense that discourse represents only part of models because of the "fact that recipients only need 'half a word' to reconstruct an intended mental model with help of the inferences based on situationally and socioculturally shared generic knowledge". This is the way to distinguish between the addressee models from the intended speaker models. Addressees build their interpretation of discourse not only with the expressed meaning of a discourse, but also with knowledge and ideologies shared socially. In addition, they invigorate old models that are strictly personal based on previous discourse or experiences (van Dijk, 2014, p.5).

### 2.1.2. Social cognition

The concept of "social cognition" is a focal aspect of the socio-cognitive approach, indicating the socially shared representations of social groups and interactions, including mental activities that "form a core element of the individual's social identity"(Meyer, 2001, p.21). Social cognition denotes "the combination of socially shared mental representations and these processes of their use in social contexts" (van Dijk, 1998, p.47). Since it is concerned with social representations, this implies that such representations are not restricted to individuals but in some way transmitted among 'many minds,' taking for granted the spread of information through perception, discourse or interaction which in return stresses the social dimension (van Dijk, 1998, p.51). Social cognition is given in three forms that are crucial to the understanding of discourse. They are **knowledge** (personal, group, cultural), **attitudes**, and **ideologies** (Meyer, 2001, p.21).

Knowledge of the world is a prerequisite element to all cognitive processes "of perception, understanding, action, interaction, language use, communication and discourse". In the

interpretation of discourse, such knowledge is enabled and expressed in the comprehension of words, meanings of expressions and overall meanings of discourse, and in the creation of personal mental models. Conversely, this knowledge can be acquired and improved through comprehending discourse and forming mental models (van Dijk, 2018, p.32). At all levels of discourse, knowledge is expressed and communicated, for example through stress placement or word order to structure topic and emphasis information in sentences, the expression of knowledge sources in evidentials, the use of "implications, implicatures, presuppositions, argumentation, among many others" (van Dijk, 2015, p.68)

Regarding attitudes, like sociocultural shared knowledge, they are basically social. They should not be understood as being personal opinions that are stored in mental models. Members of the social group share these attitudes but each with their own "identity, actions, norms and values, relations to other groups and resources". Attitudes reflect the link between social groups and their participants and the ways in which members as language users convey ideas about social issues, circumstances, persons or groups. Commonly, certain attitudes are at the center of all group members' social activities, as is the case with ethnic discrimination as the basis for various modes of segregation and exclusion in general, and with discriminatory text and talk in particular (van Dijk, 2014, p.9). Attitudes will be elaborated and discussed fully in relation to Martin and White's approach of appraisal (see 2.2).

In addition to attitudes, social cognition includes social knowledge, which refers to beliefs shared by all or most members of a given community, and ideologies which are the "basis of the social representations shared by members of a group." Ideologies enable individuals, as community members, to arrange and act appropriately depending on social beliefs about what is the case, positive or negative, right or wrong, for them. Ideologies can also form the foundation of certain arguments for, and explanations for, specific social constructions or indeed shape a particular worldview in general. Ideologies serve the material and abstract interests of the group, mainly those of domination over other groups and resistance against the dominated groups both of which have an essential role in developing ideologies. Thereby, they function locally as given in everyday social practices and globally as the socially shared mental 'monitor' of social opposition, conflict, struggle and discrimination (van Dijk, 1998, p.8).

Since they are socially shared beliefs, ideologies are not personal or private, however, they are not any kind of beliefs but more fundamental or axiomatic. They control and organize other socially shared beliefs. They are gradually acquired and modified over a lifetime or a long period, and so need to be relatively constant. One does not become pacifist, feminist, racist or communist suddenly, nor change a fundamental ideological stance in a matter of days (van Dijk, 2006a, p.116).

Ideologies are relevant to the study of discourse since "people acquire, express and reproduce their ideologies largely by text or talk." Discourse structures and social structures can be related through ideologies. Thus, properties of social relations like: class, gender or ethnicity, are regularly related to discourse structures such as: structural units, levels, or discourse strategies that are embedded in the social, political and cultural situations. Similarly, the relations between, on the one hand, social organizations, institutions, classes, occupations, contexts, power, or political decision-making, and, on the other hand, the systems of discourse (van Dijk, 1995, p.135).

Generally speaking, discourses are influenced by the ideological polarization, that is a schema in which a group conflict is involved and it stresses the opposition between the two groups or between Us and Them. In this way groups create an ideological representation of themselves and others. Such representation is based on emphasizing Our positive characteristics and emphasize Their negative ones. "Positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation seems to be a fundamental property of ideologies" (van Dijk, 1998, p.69). This strategy may extend to include 'good' attributes of Our friends and allies and 'bad' attributes of enemies. Rhetorical devices may be used to enhance polarization, that is stressing the contrast between the features of 'us' and 'them' (van, Dijk, 2006b, p.738).

### **2.1.2. Social Component**

Explaining cognition entails that language users are, above all, members of social groups, institutions and organizations, in addition to being unique individuals with their own minds and experiences, and who use text and talk to interact and communicate with other participants. Hence, a societal basis for cognition and discursive interaction is needed similar to the way the cognitive interface is needed to define and elucidate many properties of discourse (van Dijk, 2014, p.14).

It should be noted that discourse, society and cognition are interrelated, and different aspects of discourse and cognition given above (like, knowledge and ideology) are at the same time social. Accordingly, society can be scrutinized at the level of communication and situations and at the level of communities, social organizations, and institutions. Social structure and discourse are linked by social structure representations in the mind of social participants and constructing these social structures through discourse and communication between members as social actors. And though the macro concepts of power and dominance are the primary concern of the CDA, their real analysis is conducted at the micro level of discourse and social practices. (van Dijk, 2001b, p.115).

### **2.1.3. Discourse Component**

Whereas it is important to determine the nature of the cognitive and social elements of the theory, the key role of critical discourse analysts is obviously the discourse element. CDA does not establish a specific theory of discourse structures, rather it goes beyond typical structural theories of discourse. Critical discourse analysts identify and illustrate how discourse in society can be engaged in the (re)production of power abuse, or against such dominance. This also includes a cognitive dimension which is important to account for the role of knowledge, attitudes and ideologies in such discursive dominance (van Dijk, 2015b, p.72).

Described in this way, this approach is seen perfectly suitable to this study, since it concentrates on mental models with regard to mental components such as ideology, knowledge and attitudes and how they can influence discourse. Besides, the present research attempts to reveal the importance of ideology in discourse, therefore, it tends to follow van Dijk's (2011; 2015) model in which he specifies some of the discourse structures such as: topics, actor description, levels, details and precision of description, evidentiality, metaphor, and lexicon from many other elements.

## **2.2 Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory**

This theory is a highly significant approach to give the emotional and attitudinal meanings which are important aspects to figure out the spat over Covid-19 outbreak. This approach was suggested to be a system on textual evaluations and which in essence was evolved over Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Halliday and his colleagues with particular reference to the interpersonal function (Martin & White, 2005). The major view of appraisal theory is to determine "the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 1).

Eventually, the appraisal theory has three sub-categories, mainly *Attitude*, *Engagement*, and *Graduation*. Under the three sub-categories of appraisal theory, attention will be paid to *attitude* (Martin, 2000). Attitude is "concerned with our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgments of behavior and evaluation of things" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 35). The attitude may be attributed to the writer himself or attributed to another person (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 26). It involves the meanings in which speakers or writers connect intersubjective assessment of participants and processes with reference to emotional responses or culturally determined values (White, 2001, p. 4).

According to Martin and White (2005, p. 61-62), attitude can be recognized explicitly and implicitly. Explicit attitudes are realized through the use of lexicogrammar (inscribed) and implicit ones through ideational meaning (invoked). The appraisal attitude is **inscribed** means it is usually easy to realized but appraisal attitude is **invoked** when the speaker or writer tells people something implicitly which intends to invoke the situation. Although people know the reasons behind the appraisal, nevertheless, they conduct their evaluation by themselves. The appraisal **invoked** shows the supposition that the recipient will be able to apply the suitable set of values and, thus, put pressure on him to share the values. Martin and White (2005, p. 62) illustrate that "the general point here is that the selection of ideational meanings is enough to invoke evaluation, even in the absence of attitudinal lexis that tells us directly how to feel."

Attitude is composed of three categories: *Affect*, *Judgement* and *Appreciation*. Martin and Rose (2003, p. 27-28) state that "[t]here are three main types of attitude: expressing emotion, judging character and valuing the worth of things". *Affect* deals with resources to interpret emotional reactions (Martin & White, 2005, p. 35) and it is subdivided into three various categories in which affect is considered as: (a) quality (b) process and (c) comment (Martin & White, 2005, p. 46). *Judgement* is the second sub-system of attitude that means evaluating human behavior with regard to various normative principles (Martin & White, 2005, p. 35). Social norms with these *Judgement* assessments can be specific social rules and regulations or expectations and value systems. Therefore, behavior can be evaluated as ethical, immoral, legal, illegal, socially acceptable, or unacceptable, commendable or pitiful, as natural, unnatural, etc. *Judgement* is given to present certain assessments on human participants' actions and behaviors (White, 2001, p.6). Therefore, judgements are of two types: *judgements* of esteem and *judgements* of sanction. *Judgements* of esteem are connected to normality, capacity and tenacity. Whereas normality deals with showing how a person is unusual and the extent of his usual behavior, capacity tackles with the person's capability. Tenacity manifests person's dependent. *Judgements* of sanction includes two types: veracity that exhibits a person's

truthfulness and propriety that situates the ethicality of someone and someone's behavior at the fore (Martin & White, 2005, p.52).

The last sub-system is *appreciation* that searches for resources to explain the value of things and products rather than human behaviour (Martin & White, 2005, p.36). *Appreciation* is associated with evaluations the things that people make and their performance and it also includes evaluations of natural phenomena. Arbitrarily, things are appreciated in relation to their reaction, composition, and value. This means that things are evaluated in terms of the impact they make or their quality, and according to their makeup, and according to different social conventions respectively (Martin & White, 2005, p.56).

### **3. CONNECTING THE THEORIES**

After the explanation of the theoretical framework of this research, the researcher elucidates the adaptation of the selected theories. Although the two selected theories operate at various conceptual levels, they tackle with the meaning making. Whereas the appraisal theory works on meaning making potential at the semantic-evaluation level, the sociocognitive approach operates at the discourse-semantic level in relation to cognition and society. The socio-cognitive approach to CDA is selected as a major methodological track with the appraisal theory as a supplement framework to investigate the speakers' stance through the use of lexicogrammatical expressions that encode their ideological attitudes in the texts. Therefore, the appraisal theory is the most reliable model to identify stance in the current study.

The ideological dichotomy of SELF and OTHER is thus perceived as a matter of group creativity, rather than attributed to individuals. However, it is important to understand what attitude is taken towards these positive or negative representations by the US and Chinese politicians, i.e. whether they approve or disapprove of specific ideological frameworks. Such a complex approach to evaluation has been best addressed by Martin and White (2005) in their appraisal theory. Whereas traditional CDA approaches to evaluation do not account for such effects as described above, the appraisal theory offers a comprehensive framework which can be applied to the analysis of ideological value-laden discourses, such as political discourse. Thus, the above theories, i.e. Socio-cognitive approach and appraisal theory are complementary to each other in the investigation of textual corpora. This paper demonstrates that these approaches can be applied to the analysis of SELF and OTHER representations in political discourse in a complementary fashion to a more painstaking and detailed analysis.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Research Design

A qualitative method relying on a descriptive analysis is employed in this research to describe and relate the selected discourses being examined to the social and cultural phenomenon occurs in the society. Qualitative method is utilised to discourses of the US and China Officials by applying critical discourse analysis through analysing certain structures in different levels such as: lexicons, syntax, semantics, rhetoric and pragmatics in a particular socio-cultural context having an ideology that affect the cognition of audience. The qualitative method is influential in the analysis of political speeches as most of the CDA scholars did such as van Dijk (2005; 2011) and Wodak (2007; 2009; 2011) in their studies. The researcher adopts an inductive analytical approach by coding the selected speeches for specific themes depending on language and content. This is due to the fact that qualitative methods provide "a much deeper elucidation and acknowledgement of the way in which the verbal elements are being employed, as well as an understanding of the importance and meaning that can be garnered from them" (Al-Saaidi, 2016, p.86).

### 4.2 Data Selection and Collection

The researcher specifically attempts to investigate the US-China discourses over the outbreak of Covid-19 as this will tend to be foremost argumentative in nature and reveal much about which ideological backgrounds the speakers adhere to. In the critical discourse analysis, there is no specific way to be considered as a conventional form for data collection. This is due to the sporadic approach of CDA in which a number of approaches can formulate its theoretical framework. One way to collect data, as van Dijk (1997) contended, is research websites in which texts and talks are found as dataset. In this case, the most accepted and accessible archive is the Internet in which the researchers can find storage and collation of documents and data which traced back to 1990. Through the Internet which represents a solid foundation in which the researchers can conduct their first stages of research (Silverman, 2013). Hereby, the researcher of this paper can access to the selected data as they are found with barring ethical and governmental restraints.

The selected discourses consist of the transcripts of the statements, press conferences and twitter in the timeframe of March 2020 when the beginning of the spread of the virus worldwide and this makes the tense over Covid-19 was in the peak. These texts provide data to study the role of socio-political beliefs and ideologies in arriving at conflicting views and theories on the outbreak of Covid-19. These transcribed texts are obtained easily from the public websites particularly governmental ones such as <http://whitehouse.gov> and <http://ge.china-embassy.org>. Tweets of the USA and China officials are given especial attention due to the fact that they constitute one of the "newness" way of interaction for powerful forms of discourse to have large audiences who will shape the public's ideologies and perceptions for example <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump>, <https://twitter.com/mikepompeo> and <https://twitter.com/zlj517>. The reason for collecting and analysing twitter discourses is that they represent powerful forms of discourse that are widely circulated among large audiences, giving them the potential to have a huge impact in shaping the public's perceptions and ideologies.

## 5. DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The researcher systematically analyses the data according to the levels and dimensions mentioned in the socio-cognitive approach and the appraisal theory. The linguistic analysis focuses on different structures that are affected by the cognitive and social structures. Then attitudinal analysis at the different linguistic structures is also provided. In the second phase of analysis, the semantic realisation of text is analysed to find the attitudinal stances of the politicians involved in the construction/emergence of a particular text in context.

## 6. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section offers a thorough analysis of the diplomatic spat over Covid-19 through the adapted framework. This framework is utilised to identify the macro-structures and micro-structures that are essential to reveal the ideological attitudes found in the selected texts. Extracts from the texts are identified according to van Dijk's model amalgamated with the evaluative analysis provided by White and Martin's theory to discuss the attitudes highlighted in the selected texts.

### Macro-Structure Analysis

#### 1.5.1 Semantic Macrostructures: Topics

According to socio-cognitive approach, semantic macrostructures consist of macro-propositions which summarize the micro-propositions. Macro-structures are essential for the identification of global discourse topics, the foundation of the global coherence, and the depiction of several genres properties of talk and text (van Dijk, 1977; 1980). According to van Dijk (2009), semantic macrostructures that define the global discourse topic may not be expressed explicitly in the text rather they define the mental model which expresses the overall meanings of the reader and author of the discourse. Related to the macro-propositions in the selected discourses, it is shown that there are many mutual topics are evoked by the US and China high-level officials. These topics are identified as follows:

#### 1. Conspiracy theory and mutual accusations

The discourses given by US and China high-level officials are very well summarised the major topic that is of mutual accusations and blame for the outbreak of Covid 19. So, let us scrutinize the presentation of the knowledge of the pandemic in these discourses. These discourses create a controversy among public about the origin of Covid-19. Thus, it is assumed what is presented as a fact and accepted by a majority in the following extracts might be considered as misguided beliefs and intentional accusations for certain goals.

On the one hand, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Zhao Lijian attempts to accuse and blame the American army for the pandemic through its Military Military World Games participation happened in October saying:

1. "It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation." (Zhao Lijian, 12 March 2020).

In this tweet, Zhao's allegation promotes the conspiracy theory that the virus originated in the US. The Chinese diplomat's personal tweet was taken as China's stance to fuel the conspiracy theory that the virus emerged in Wuhan city was first spread by US.

On the other hand, Donald Trump rejected the accusation declaring that it comes from China as explaining this in his news conference 17 and 18, March 2020.

2. "Well, China was putting out information, which was false, that our military gave this to them. That was false. And rather having an argument, I said I have to call it where it came from; it did come from China. So I think it's a very accurate term. But, no, I didn't appreciate the fact that China was saying that our military gave it to them. Our military did not give – give it to anybody". (Trump, 17 March 2020)
3. "I have great love for all of the people from our country, but as you know China tried to say at one point... that it was caused by American soldiers. That can't happen. It's not gonna happen, not as long as I'm President. It comes from China." (Trump, 18 March 2020)

We have seen above that ideologies tend to be polarized between positive US (ingroup) and negative THEM (outgroup). Extracts (2 and 3) express a negative attitude in the mental model of Trump about the Chinese government which touted the conspiracy theory. This kind of description requires an activation of the political and historical knowledge for the readers in order to make such inference. The denial in his speech is emphasized through the repetition of *"our military gave this to them. That was false... China was saying that our military gave it to them. Our military did not give – give it to anybody"* which based on the contextual model of the event featuring the location in which the virus was first detected. In this sense, he affirms that China's claim is not a fact at all rather it is just an accusation. This kind of presupposition thus functions as an oblique assertion, which is manipulative because it is less easily challenged than a direct assertion.

## 2. Racism and stigmatization

Many ideologies are highlighted such as racism and stigmatization particularly in the US discourses. In his tweet on late Monday 16 March, Trump called the virus as the “Chinese Virus”, that offences people of China and in turn led to the political incorrectness (Shafer, 2017), See the following tweet:

4. "The United States will be powerfully supporting those industries, like Airlines and others, that are particularly affected by the Chinese Virus. We will be stronger than ever before! "

Trump was accused of being racist as he did not name the virus by its world-wide accepted name rather by calling it after the country i.e, China. This led to an international crisis between US and China and its allies. On March 18, Trump was questioned on his choice of language at a press conference for the expression "China virus", in which he denies of having xenophobic and racist attitude as shown below:

5. “It’s not racist at all. No, it’s not at all. It’s from China. That’s why. It comes from China. I want to be accurate.” (Trump, 18 March 2020).

Actually, the discursive and cognitive structures in Trump's mental model indicate that he polarizes SELF and OTHER, and reinforcing the superiority of SELF. This is shown through his view that the virus comes from China was not wrong and also it was not racist. In his statements, Trump attempts to assert for the international community that China is a threat. This is explained not as his attitude (which is supported by his officials) rather as a fact and as a knowledge through the use of the factive verb "comes". However, Trump's call for endorsement of such fact presupposes that it is not generally agreed upon and hence a

controversial, group-based attitude rather than generally shared historical or political knowledge. At the same time, he estranges the ideology of racism from his speeches.

### 3. China's transparency and response to Covid-19

Trump triggers an attack on the Chinese government in relation to its response to COVID-19 criticizing Beijing of its slow reaction and lack of transparency.

6. "No, they weren't transparent. They were transparent at that time, but when we saw what happened, they could have been transparent much earlier than they were". (Trump, 21 March 2020) White House coronavirus briefing

Trump's stance was supported by Mike Pompeo, who have accused Beijing for its failures in sharing information about the early stages which hinder the global response and saving lives. This depicts China as secretive and untrustworthy focusing on the suppression of early warnings of the outbreak in Wuhan including by Dr Li Wenliang.

Pompeo has increasingly criticized China for the lack of transparency around early details of the pandemic and "the disinformation campaign that the Chinese Communist Party is engaged in to try and deflect from what has really taken place here."

7. "My concern is that this cover-up, this disinformation that the Chinese Communist Party is engaged in, is still denying the world the information it needs so that we can prevent further cases or something like this from recurring again," (Pompeo, 26 March 2020)

He should cease "politicalizing" the pandemic and defaming China. Pompeo has said that that China has put thousands of lives at risk. He mentioned that the Communist government in the state is still denying to give information about the pandemic that the world needs to combat it.

8. "When we go back and look at this, we will, I think, all find out who was transparent, who was straightforward in the course of this moving forward. We can see – and you referred to this earlier – the cover-up effort continues; the disinformation campaign from Russia and Iran as well as China continues. They're talking about it coming from the U.S. Army and they're saying maybe it began in Italy, all things to deflect responsibility". (Pompeo, 26 March 2020)

"And while the time will come for recriminations, we've got to work our way forward. But the world needs to understand what's really going on, because it's still important. It's still important to have transparency even today. This is an ongoing global crisis, and we need to make sure that every country today is being transparent sharing what's really going on, so that the global community, the global health care, infectious disease community can begin to work on this in a holistic way". (Pompeo, 26 March 2020)

From its side, China pushed back firmly allegations made by the US government for spreading misinformation. The Chinese foreign ministry stated that:

9. "China has all along been open and transparent in information release."

Perhaps the most pervasive discursive strategy of *US* and *China* officials during March 2020 is presenting suspicions and accusations as facts, that is, without the usual or obligatory markers of doubt or distance. In this complicated situation worldwide, it is thus very difficult

if not impossible for people to know what are mere accusations or suspicions and what has been proven or what will be discovered in the laboratory about the virus.

### Micro-Structure analysis

#### Actor description

According to van Leeuwen (2008), actors can be described in different ways as personal or impersonal, collective or institution, individual or members of category, generic or specific and so on. Van Dijk (1987) stated that the description of the actor by using such ways presupposes specific mental models. The actors in the selected data are described neither by category nor by names and group rather they are described by their actions. This means that the qualities of the social actors' (non) presence in the texts are examined and the linguistic mechanisms adopted in the perspectivizing of this presence are also analysed.

On 18 March press briefing, Trump announced his attitude which is a negative judgment about the China government for giving false information about the origin of the virus through the use of the adjective "false". In this speech, Trump has employed social sanction (propriety) with the adjective "false". This word denotes unethical behaviour which most societies tend to punish with sanctions enforced by law.

10. "Well, *China* was putting out information, which was *false*, that our military gave this to them. That was *false*. Rather than having an argument, I said I have to call it where it came from. It did come from China. I think it's a very accurate term. But no, I didn't appreciate the fact that *China* was saying that our military gave it to them. Our military did not give it to anybody". (Trump, 17 March 2020)

In the same line, Pompeo accused China for the suffering of people in different countries because of covering up the information about the virus as showing in his speech:

11. "There will come a day when we will go evaluate how the entire world responded. *We* know this much: *We* know that the first government to be aware of the Wuhan virus was the Chinese Government. That imposes a special responsibility to raise the flag, to say, "We have a problem, this is different and unique and presents risk." And it took an *awful long time* for the world to become aware of this risk that was sitting there, residing inside of China. *We'll do the after-action when the time is right*. Every nation has a responsibility to share all of their data, all of their information in as timely and accurate a fashion as they have the ability to do not only because it's the right thing to do, but because that's how you *save lives for your own people* as well. *The Chinese Communist Party* had a responsibility to do this not only for Americans and Italians and South Koreans and Iranians who are now *suffering*, but for their own people as well." (Pompeo, 18 March 2020)

Upon revealing the Americans, Italians and South Koreans and also Chinese' feeling (*affect*), it is expected that feelings under such circumstances are **negative**, as this is due to the nature of human psychology. Pompeo has generalized the affect to include some people in the world that *feel* "suffering" and exposed to the same incident. Thus, the use of the appraisal expression "suffering", according to the semantic sense, has the meaning of *in/security or un/happiness* as it is associated with **negative** attitudes derived from its sense component as associated with negative actions that usually cause social harm.

In the above extract, Pompeo utilised the personal pronoun "we" to show the ideological attitudes towards China. The inclusive "we" he used in his speech indicates that he talked for the benefit of all people worldwide and inclusive with the US government which expresses power and solidarity particularly with the use of speech act of warning in "We'll do the after-action when the time is right". He showed that these attitudes as a shared common knowledge among all countries that are affected by the virus. In fact, these ideological attitudes are part of the mental model of the actors' actions description. Therefore, this way of description combines shared common sense knowledge with ideologically based appraisals. Apparently, the description of China and the debate about the origin of the virus indicate this. Trump and Pompeo referred to China as an actor by the formal form of saying the Chinese Communist Party. The description of China in terms of its action without reference to the president and his officials is all negative.

In these extracts, Pompeo shows the social actors as being China through referring to the linguistics mechanism employed in perspectivizing the essence of China as the only responsible for the outbreak. He refers to China with appositive sentence which defines China as the place where Covid-19 was originated and spread. In previous extract, Pompeo named China by its political name "The Chinese Communist Party which is only one ruling party in China. The Chinese communist party was blaming for causing harm for not only Americans, South Koreans, Italians and Iranians but also for its people i.e. Chinese.

12. "It all comes from the top. *They* could have easily stopped the plague, but *they* didn't!" (Trump, 21 March 2020)

Hereby, Trump used pronoun "they" to refer to the Chinese president and his administration. He associated the virus with the "plague" which was very dangerous disease that affected many lives. This association is absolutely negative as they can handle the virus but they did not do it as if they are intended to spread the disease. This personal attitude is explicitly expressed Trump's ideology toward China in order to escalate the war between them and also to blame China for this virus. Hereby, Trump used *appreciation* in the sense of criticism.

On the other hand, the key Chinese foreign policy leader Xinhua criticised US politician who is Pompeo for his allegation for the accountability of China for the Covid-19 pandemic. He gave his sophisticated judgment saying the American officials should spend their time in "*better controlling the epidemic situation at home*". This is supported by Geng Shuang 's speech in his daily press briefing as shown in the following speech:

13. "Faced with the pandemic, the guiding consensus for all countries is to join hands and overcome difficulties together. *Pointing the finger at others is certainly not constructive, nor will it get any backing.* To quote an ancient Chinese saying, "Turn inward and examine yourself when you encounter difficulties in life." *We urge* the US official to respect facts and the common understanding of the international community. Every minute wasted on smearing and complaining *would be better spent on enhancing domestic response and international cooperation.*" (Geng Shuang, 12 March 2020)

The Chinese official discourse involves utilisation of judgement to explain US officials' negative assessments behavior by reference to their social norms. He used the social esteem to assess their reaction to encounter the virus as only blaming others which is very decisive and unfruitful through the use of negation form with adverb to emphasize the situation as in "*certainly not constructive*

14. "In recent days *we noticed* many discussions on the origin of the COVID-19. *We firmly oppose* the *unfounded and irresponsible comments* made by certain high-level US officials and Congress members on this issue *to smear and attack China*." (Geng Shuang, 12 March 2020)

According to the situation worldwide, China evaluates the US statements about the outbreak of Covid-19 as an attack caused by US politicians "*to smear and attack China*". The speaker uses the pronoun "we" to indicate the inclusiveness with the Chinese Government to provide a negative *appreciation* of the situation as a whole through the use of adjectives "*unfounded and irresponsible comments*". Herein, Geng Shuang showed his *reaction* towards the comments said by the US officials about the origin of the virus which may be attributed to some economic and political spats. The fact is,

15. "there are different opinions in the US and among the larger international community on the origin of the virus. *China believes* it's a matter of science which requires *professional and science-based assessment*." (Geng Shuang, 13 March 2020)

16. "Some US political figures have recently been connecting the coronavirus with China. We express *strong indignation and objection to such stigmatization*". (Geng Shuang, 13 March 2020)

17. "The World Health Organization and the international community *oppose* intentional linkage of the virus and specific countries or regions, which is a *form of stigmatization*. We urge the US to immediately correct its mistake and stop making *unwarranted accusations on China*." (Geng Shuang, 13 March 2020)

The verb *express* and the pronoun *we* show the feeling of objection against US politicians stigmatization though Geng Shuang did not mention the actors by their names rather by their political positions. Geng Shuang directly associated some US politicians with the **negative** attitude of being stigmatized people particularly Chinese. For Geng Shuang, the association of coronavirus with China is carried out of racism due to many reasons. As for the evaluation category, it has been manifested through the words "We express strong indignation and objection to such stigmatization". The focus and the repetition of *stigmatization* which is a result of connecting Covid-19 with China has a social impact on Chinese people. This disgrace has been rejected by Chinese officials and considered it as **racial behavior (negative judgement)** that committed by US president who present his personal opinion about conspiracy theory, as mentioned earlier. It can then be said that the form of *judgement* uses in the preceding f sentences is *social sanction: propriety*.

Additionally, Geng Shuang repeatedly objected the unwarranted accusation of China for the Covid-19 supporting this by WHO and the international community rejection to associate the virus with nations or regions because this is considered as a stigmatization which is not accepted worldwide. Herein, Geng Shuang expressed his knowledge that the virus is not

connected to China as US politicians claimed. As for the US politicians' point of view, they believe that China is responsible for the outbreak of Covid -19.

18. "Recently amid the COVID-19 pandemic, paying no respect to science and WHO advice, some US high-level officials and congress members *have been stigmatizing* China in their slanders against our country, which has triggered *strong indignation among the Chinese people*. China firmly *opposes and condemns such smears*." (Geng Shuang, 19 March 2020)

19. "Recently, some in the US have been deliberately linking the novel coronavirus to China and stigmatizing China non-stop. We are *strongly indignant and opposed* to it. Their claims of China *lacking openness and transparency* are simply *fact-distorting*." (Geng Shuang, 21 March 2020)

Geng Shuang kept repeating the same situation that China was stigmatized by US officials. Thus, a "*reaction category*" is used in this report. The adjective ***strong indignation*** indicates the Chinese people's reaction and the emotional impact of the unhappy accident with such accusation. The use of noun "slanders" indicates a negative attitude against China.

Most of Chinese press conferences refer to actors with reference to pronouns "we and they" which indicates dichotomy of ideology SELF and OTHER. In the extracts above, Geng Shuang used the pronoun "we" as inclusive referring to China represented by its president and officials for USA to stop its unwarranted accusations against China for the pandemic. Geng Shuang used the lexicons "urge, express, notice and oppose" which express his attitudes towards the situation. This is the way of characterization enemies and in the debates about the origin of the Covid-19 the classical case is definitely shift the blame on US. Interestingly, there was explicit reference to some US political figures/officials signalling formality without explicit naming for those figures who can be understood as Trump and Pompeo. The description is not based on their functions rather they were referred to by reference to their actions which are obviously all negative.

20. "We advise this politician not to go further down the wrong path, otherwise his hypocrisy and malign intentions will be further exposed, prompting more indignation and objection among the Chinese people and the international community". (Geng Shuang, 26 March 2020)

He expressed his judgement explicitly through describing Pompeo negatively as hypocrite and has malign intentions. Through the use of pronoun "we" including himself with the Chinese people and government, Geng Shuang showed a shared knowledge about this politician i.e. Pompeo. Pragmatically, Geng Shuang's speech represents a speech act of advice for the American politician.

21. "Faced with the pandemic, countries need to cooperate and tide over the difficulties together. *Smearing others and shifting the blame* simply cannot help a country combat the disease at home, nor can it contribute to the international epidemic response. As we repeatedly stated, *we'd like to* work with the international community, the US included, to conduct closer cooperation in *defeating* the virus at an early date and *safeguarding global public health security*." (Geng Shuang, 19 March 2020)

### Level, detail and precision of description

The second semantic feature in van Dijk's approach is the precise description of situations and events which is very essential in the analysis of text and talk. Different situations and events in the selected data are analysed as in Pompeo's depiction of China's mishandling initial aspects of the outbreak through describing the state in which many people are traveling from Wuhan to different countries then spreading the virus. The Secretary attempts to provide a coarse description for the situation in order to display a plausible proof the China is responsible for the outbreak. See the following:

22. "I'm *happy* about the efforts that they have taken, but *no less authority* than the Chinese Communist Party said it came from Wuhan. So don't take Mike Pompeo's word for it. We have *pretty high confidence* that we know where this began, and we have *high confidence* too that there was information that could have been made available *more quickly* and data that could have been provided and shared among health professionals across the world. It's *most unfortunate*". (Pompeo, 6 March 2020)

In the above extract, Pompeo used various expressions of appraisal denoting his emotion to be satisfied with China's effort to handle the virus through the use of the adjective *happy* and also to show the *attitudes* of the international community and in particular the US officials towards these efforts. The use of the connector "but" changes the attitude to be a common knowledge about the origin of the virus which it came from Wuhan as he did not use his authority to accuse China. He cleverly deployed the China's words that the virus came from Wuhan city and considers this as a condemnation from China about the origin of this virus. The positive feeling of *confidence* in Pompeo's words "We have *pretty high confidence* that we know where this began, and we have *high confidence* too that there was information that could have been made available *more quickly*" expresses his knowledge that US is confident in its abilities to know everything and thus it would be expected from China to share the information about the virus, a thing which China did not do it as Pompeo believes. He repeatedly uses the adjectival phrase "high confident" which is dissipated with the negative judgment of "It's *most unfortunate*". In this sense, Pompeo's knowledge presupposes that China's low response to provide information about the virus is unethical behaviour that it causes harm for the people and thus it deserves a punishment. The linguistic evidence for this (**negative**) behaviour is inference that is also obtained from the semantic meaning of the word *unfortunate*.

23. "The Wuhan virus that began at the end of last year is something that this administration is taking *incredibly seriously*. The State Department has been very involved from the beginning when we worked *diligently* to get hundreds of Americans out of Hubei province, out of Wuhan, and get them back to the United States *safely*." (Pompeo, 6 March 2020)

Pompeo described US attitude to Covid-19 as a serious disease through the use of double adverbs *incredibly seriously* and adverb *diligently*. The positive feeling of belief and seriousness to save people's lives show care and conscientiousness in one's work or duties and also give a power to the description of the act to affect the recipients. This positive attitude presupposes that China is a threat and risk as US takes its responsibility to move its citizens to a safer place which is United States. Pompeo uses *in/security* as one of the *affect* categories through the semantic components and sense of the word *safely*.

24. "This *disinformation campaign*, which began when we began to call out this risk that was created not only for the Chinese people, but now we can see people all across the world where the Chinese Government knew about this risk, had identified it, they were the first to know, and they *wasted valuable days* at the front end, allowing hundreds of thousands of people to leave Wuhan to go to places like Italy that's now *suffering so badly*. They tried to *suppress* this information – you talked about the means by which they did it – instead of trying to actually do the work to suppress the virus, which is what the world demanded. And the Chinese Communist Party didn't get it right and *put countless lives at risk* as a result of that." (Pompeo, 18 March 2020)

This speech is an obvious accusation for China due to the catastrophic situation worldwide. The negative attitude about China's role is manifested through the phrase *wasted valuable days* causing a feeling of *suffer* to Italians which is described as *so badly*. Additionally, the feeling of insecurity that people worldwide have experienced put China at the top of accusation for the pandemic. This feeling is expressed through the use of adjective *risk*. Hereby, Pompeo expressed his moral judgement of condemnation (social sanction). Thus, the ideological polarity is demystified with reference to pronouns *we* and *they* expressing acts done by each side.

On the other hand, Pompeo attempted to shift the blame to an action as shown below:

25. "...the disinformation campaign that they are waging is designed to shift responsibility. Now is not the time for *recrimination*. Now is the time to solve this global pandemic and work to take down risks to Americans and people all across the world. My team just got off the phone with the – our ambassador to Italy. The remarkable work our team's doing there to help the Italian people would make every American *proud*. We're doing this all across the world." (Pompeo, 18 March 2020)

The positive description of US actions towards the outbreak of the pandemic manifests China's disablement in handling the outbreak through using the strategy of *recrimination*. Pompeo's mistakenly addresses this strategy as US first speaks of conspiracy theory. He continues to describe US positive action towards people worldwide particularly with Italians who suffered great deal from the outbreak of Covid-19.

The use of satisfaction of "proud" elicits **positive judgement**. It can be seen that the Trump uses *social esteem* in the above text, in a positive way, so the adjective "*proud*" indicates that the assistance of Italians by American team as a beneficial person and accomplished something for his community that made him proud of himself and his team. The adjective "proud" is *social esteem* of **tenacity** because it refers to evaluations of duty towards other countries.

26. "There will come a day when we will go evaluate how the entire world responded. We know this much: *We* know that the first government to be aware of the Wuhan virus was the Chinese Government. That imposes a special responsibility to raise the flag, to say, "We have a problem, this is different and unique and presents risk." And it took an *awful long time* for the world to become aware of this risk that was sitting there, residing inside of China. *We'll do the after-action when the time is right*. Every nation has a responsibility to share all of their data, all of their information in as timely and accurate a fashion as they have the ability to do not only because it's the right thing to do, but because that's how you *save lives for your own people* as well. The Chinese Communist Party had a responsibility to do this not only for Americans and Italians and

South Koreans and Iranians who are now *suffering*, but for their own people as well." (Pompeo, 18 March 2020)

Continually, Pompeo in the above extract describes the China's disinformation campaign as taking an *awful long time* to inform the world about the truth of the virus. This cover up of the truth is not only Pompeo's attitude rather it is a common knowledge that is shared by most governments. Actually, this reflects the description of negative features of the outgroup as in this case, where the vague term "*after-action*" is used instead of a resolution to the international investigation to discover the origin of the virus. Describing the in-group is positive through maintaining the action done by the US administration to combat the deadly virus through abstract level of description and without coarse level of description of how USA will eliminate the outbreak. Instead, the US government presents an advice to all governments to provide accurate information for the sake of their citizens' safety as in the use of the words *save* and *suffering*. Herein, Pompeo expressed his feeling of security and that is important for the settlement of world.

Once again, the act of protecting and saving Americans is highly shown in the US politicians' speeches as in:

27. "As you all know, the Trump administration continues to put an *enormous amount of energy* into *combating* the Wuhan virus and *protecting* the American people. *We're highly engaged* here at the State Department on that critical mission." (Pompeo, 18 March 2020)

28. "we closed it down to China, the source *very, very early, very, very early*, far earlier than even the great professionals wanted to do. I think in the end that's going to be, that will have *saved a tremendous number of lives*". (Trump, 17 March 2020)

Trump repeated the intensifying adverb *very* to emphasise his early knowledge about the virus. The description of the action shows that the US government decides to do it, this description then diminishes to show that this is subjective action did by him as with the reference of pronoun "I" to practice his authority as a president and a savior for the greatest country in the world ever. Trump herein did not provide a coarser or finer granularity in the description of the action. or at more or less general or specific levels.

The Chinese side has repeated many times that some people in the US have been seeking by every means to link the virus with China and stigmatize China. This was met with strong indignation and firm objection from the Chinese people. WHO and the international community explicitly oppose linking the virus with any specific country or region and reject stigmatization.

29. "Some in the US who can *still* see things clearly have *publicly opposed* the saying of "Chinese virus", pointing out that it is *bald-faced racism and xenophobia*. They believe that calling it "Chinese virus" will expose certain people under the *risk of racism and violence*. The novel coronavirus affects everyone and needs to be tackled with joint efforts, instead of *fear-mongering in a xenophobic way*. Many mainstream media and think tanks in the US have also strongly criticized *the absurd remarks* made by certain American individuals."

30. "Recently, there have been some arguments between China and the US about the origin of the virus. I want to point out that it was the US side that started this argument. It was also the

US that first claimed that the virus originated in China and used such terms as "Chinese virus" and "Wuhan virus". According to media reports, as early as March 6, Pompeo started to use "Wuhan virus" in public remarks. Since then, some US politicians and senior officials have been using this term to *stigmatize China, causing great anger and strong opposition* from the Chinese people. What I just cited are *public records*. There is no way for the US to deny this."

31. "Finally, I wish certain people in the US could heed the reasonable voice at home and from the international community and stop making wrongful remarks that stigmatize China. We hope they can understand that *confounding public opinion, deflecting responsibilities and shouting "Chinese virus" or "Wuhan virus" will not help with their own or the international efforts against the pandemic*. The top priority for the US should be focusing on putting their own house in order and working with China and the international community to contribute to the global fight against the pandemic." (Geng Shuang, 24 March 2020)

32. "China has made clear its stance on the origin of the virus. *We firmly oppose stigmatization on China. This stance has not changed.*"

33. "The virus knows *no borders and ethnicity*. It can only be defeated by the concerted efforts of all mankind. COVID-19 has taken footholds and is rapidly spreading in many parts of the world. We hope that the US will work with China and the larger international community to *jointly fight* against the pandemic and *safeguard the global public health security*."

34. "In recent press conferences, we have repeatedly responded to the US accusations. At a press conference last week, I also detailed how China has kept the US updated on the epidemic by retracing the timeline."

35. "*China has always shared information, stayed in communication and cooperated with WHO and countries and regions including the US in an open, transparent and responsible manner, which has been widely praised by the international community.*"

36. "*We urge the US to respect facts and the international public opinion, stop politicizing the pandemic and discrediting China, and focus on getting its own house in order and stemming the spread of the pandemic in its country.*" (Geng Shuang, 25 March 2020)

37. "*As China has repeatedly pointed out, origin-tracing of the virus is a complicated matter, where we should rely on professional views from the science community. WHO and the international community explicitly object to linking the virus with specific countries or regions, or seeking stigmatization. They have commended China's response. However, this American politician continues to defy global consensus, stigmatize China and discredit its epidemic response. The sinister intention behind his attempt is to deflect attention at home and shift the blame to the innocent.*"

38. "I have to point out that the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading across the globe and the situation in the US is *getting worse*. *Under such circumstances, if a politician keeps provoking political disputes and disrupting international cooperation in combating the virus, instead of focusing on containing the spread at home and contributing to global cooperation, what morality does he have?*"

39. "People of the world have all witnessed that it is under the leadership of the CPC that the Chinese people achieved *independence, freedom and liberation* and made enormous progress

in national development. It is also under the leadership of the CPC that the Chinese nation united as one and *speedily fought* against COVID-19, buying precious time for the global response. These are plain facts for all to see."

40. "We advise this politician not to go further down the wrong path, otherwise *his hypocrisy and malign intentions will be further exposed, prompting more indignation and objection among the Chinese people and the international community.*"(Geng Shuang, 26 March 2020)

41. "Since the pandemic broke out, China has taken the most *comprehensive, thorough and rigorous measures* against it and such measures have produced great results. This is our contribution to the global fight against the pandemic. All along, *China has been open, transparent and responsible in sharing information*, staying in close communication and carrying out cooperation with relevant countries and international organizations including G7. *What we have done has won us applause from the international community.*"

42. "We urge the US side to respect facts and the public opinion of the international community and stop politicizing the pandemic and stigmatizing China. As we said repeatedly, *the top priority for the US* is to put its own house in order, do its level best to halt the spread of COVID-19 and play a constructive role in the international cooperation against the pandemic. Trying to *muddy the water and divert responsibility* at this moment will not help solve any problem." (Geng Shuang, 26 March 2020)

The Chinese official gave many components of description, actions or events in this level of description. In this ideological discourse, Geng Shuang 's variation of the description can be biased against the US officials' statements. Thus, the negative attributes of the Others are depicted in global topics with very specific ways of description and in more concise detail. This can be shown in his daily press conference as in:

43. "The origin of the virus can only be determined by science. We need to rely on scientific and professional views. We don't hope to see anyone making an issue out of this to stigmatize other countries. With COVID-19 developing into a pandemic, the world should come together to fight it instead of leveling accusations and attacks against each other, which is not constructive at all."

44. "China's efforts are an important part of the global response and our endeavors and progress are important contributions. Going forward, while combating the disease at home, China will make contributions to the global fight against COVID-19. Virus is an enemy of all human beings as it knows no borders. China will work hand in hand with other countries and contribute our *strength and wisdom to securing a final victory* against the pandemic and to building a community with a shared future for mankind".

45. "The World Health Organization has just made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic, indicating that it has become a common challenge to all human beings. We hope certain US officials could focus on domestic response and international cooperation instead of trying to shift the blame to China by denigrating the Chinese government and people's efforts to fight the epidemic. This immoral and irresponsible behavior will in no way help mitigate COVID-19 in the US."

46. "The US official accuses China of "covering up" the disease. Well, the world knows better that China released information in an open and transparent manner. It identified the pathogen within a record short period of time and shared the genetic sequence of the virus with WHO and other countries including the US. Not long ago, China hosted a WHO mission including US experts for a nine-day visit, after which they highly commended China's transparency. Here we do not comment on whether the US response is open and transparent, but obviously, someone in the US still turns a deaf ear to international appraisal on China." (Geng Shuang, 12 March 2020)

### **Evidentiality**

Evidentiality is a linguistic means in which the speaker attempts to provide evidence of his knowledge in an event and the degree of reliability the speaker assigns to it (Chafe and Nichols, 1986, p. vii). At the semantic level, evidentiality can be expressed by many forms such as pragmatic devices and social functions.

American officials including Trump and Pompeo make general statements in their addresses when they describe the current situation that the world faced in relation to Covid-19. It seems their unproven theory that the virus has originated in China has tenuous evidentiality. It seems their touted theory that the virus has originated in China lacks tenuous evidentiality. This is shown obviously in Trump and Pompeos' responses when they were asked to provide evidence, they said:

47. "I can't tell you that. I'm not allowed to tell you that." (Trump, 21 March 2020)

48. "We have people looking at it very, very strongly. Scientific people, intelligence people, and others. We're going to put it all together. *I think* we will have a very good answer eventually. And China *might* even tell us." (Trump, 21 March 2020)

49. "We are still asking the Chinese Communist Party to allow experts to get into that virology lab so that we can determine precisely where this virus began," (Trump, 21 March 2020)

50. "We know that there is the Wuhan Institute of Virology just a handful of miles away from where the wet market was," (Pompeo, 12 March 2020)

*Actually, this response with no clear evidence and no details indicates Trump's procrastination to shift the blame and accusation to the other side. Thus, they were not credible as they did not attribute their knowledge to a reliable reference. Later, they attempted to defend their conspiracy theory as the Chinese government rejects to conduct an international investigation in the Wuhan laboratory where the outbreak of the virus is started though this needs solid argumentation. Nonetheless, Trump and his officials stimulated China to provide evidence to show that it is not responsible for this virus particularly after their claim that US has the evidence that the virus is originated in Wuhan Lab but was not allowed to declare as shown below.*

In the examples above, by using the two evidentials: belief evidential *I think* (attitude marker) and inferring evidential *might* (modal) as hedges, Trump withheld his low commitment to the propositions and revealed the uncertainty of the truth concerning the origin of the virus on the one hand. On the other hand, the use of such hedges might open certain negotiation among the international community in terms of negation, criticism or confirmation from China

and WHO. Hereby, Trump used evidentials as an epistemic to express his judgment which lacks degree of assertability of the truth connected to his state of knowledge.

*Aggressively, Chinese officials countered these narratives for attributing the origin of the virus to the laboratory in Wuhan city. The Chinese official, Lijian Zhao, in his tweet offered an evidence accusing U.S. through sharing an article which is entitled "Further Evidence that the virus Originated in the US." to show the source of his knowledge about the origin of the virus. This is called quotative evidentiality because the state is being told by another source. Below is the evidence given by Zhao:*

51. "This article is very much important to each and every one of us. Please read and retweet it. COVID-19: Further Evidence that the Virus Originated in the US. <https://globalresearch.ca/covid-19further-evidence-virus-orginated-us/5706078...>". (Zhao Lijian, 13 March 2020)

On the other hand, the Chinese official Geng Shuang said:

52. "...the origin of the coronavirus is a matter of science that requires professional, science-based assessment. We firmly oppose certain high-level US officials and congress members using it to smear China and the epidemic prevention efforts and progress made by the Chinese government and people."(Geng Shuang, 18 March 2020)

As seen from Geng Shuang 's speech, he did not show any witness evidence for the origin of the virus instead he left this for science to discover this. This non-witness evidential which is neither personal nor experienced referred by Geng Shuang about the origin of the virus can be obtained by a secondhand source. Supporting this, a research was conducted by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence at White House to investigate the origin of the virus declaring that the intelligence community "*concur with the wide scientific consensus that the Covid-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified*". Hereby, we have a reporting evidential type which characterised by the use of verb "concur". Therefore, the main source of Geng Shuang 's knowledge is the WHO and its inspectors and the scientific experts who on April 21 said all available evidence suggests the coronavirus originated in China at the end of 2019 was not manipulated or made in a laboratory. Thus, Geng Shuang 's assessment of the origin of the virus did not denote his personal mental model but it was an official one that was defined by WHO inspectors.

It is shown from the above statements that the officials of China and U.S. are apt to utilise sharpening words to confirm their knowledge about the origin of the pandemic though it is yet to be determined. Such speeches are more likely to attract the attention of the audience, because the audience can clearly judge the speaker's attitude that based on solid evidence towards things.

## **Metaphor**

Metaphors are utilised as a powerful semantic device in any talk and text to make it ideologically biased (Lakoff, 2002). Based on the cognition and embedded in culture, metaphors link abstract notions to concrete expressions of people. The use of metaphor is to help understand something unfamiliar and abstract (i.e. the virus) by using terms that are

familiar and embodied (i.e. a location, a nationality or a person). Consequently, the negative and positive feelings may be intensified. Metaphors have the power to hint at patterns and evoke unconscious reactions that change the way we think.

The new era of Covid-19 which caused transformation of the world in which life undeniably different that affected economy and communities. This made Trump seized on the virus to create a cultural crisis and threat to the migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, and non-white immigrants who embody in the xenophobic demagoguery through the use of metaphor. This can be seen in his Oval Office address to the nation on March 11, 2020 describing COVID-19 as the “foreign virus” as shown below:

52. "This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a *foreign virus* in modern history. I am confident that by counting and continuing to take these tough measures, we will significantly reduce the threat to our citizens, and we will ultimately and expeditiously *defeat* this virus." (Trump, 11 March 2020)

As evidence the metaphor a nation- as- a-body expressing by the expression “foreign virus” showing that nation is like a body having an external threat that is foreign and hence, a threat to the world peace and health. His connection of the virus to the foreigners has a vital role to the cognitive bias of his supporters against outsiders and immigrants and their fear of contagion – racial, social, cultural or otherwise. That is why he detours the blame and considers himself as the Savior-in-Chief who has saved “tens of thousands of lives” from the “foreign enemy.” Desperately, Trump desires to be that hero.

Later, Trump repeatedly referred to the virus as “the plague” in the following extracts:

53. "It all comes from the top. They could have easily stopped the *plague*, but they didn't!"

54. "...the *plague* will start and spread inside our ‘borders’”.

Covid-19 is represented as a plague, a lethal disease, that spread fast. Therefore, Trump's speech is informational in a sense to show that it comes from China and also as a plea for the Chinese Officials and medical doctors to take an action.

More than twenty times in his speeches on March, Trump depicted the virus as the “Chinese virus”— spurring a racist acts directed toward Asians within USA. The use of the adjective “Chinese” is considered a problematic because it connects the virus with an ethnicity. Historically, such a term was utilised to show Othering who are anti-immigrants including Chinese immigrants in North USA. Therefore, such a lexicon catalyzes disgust, fear, resentment and anxiety associated with those people of that group. See some of these examples:

55. "I always treated the *Chinese Virus* very seriously, and have done a very good job from the beginning, including my very early decision to close the “borders” from China - against the wishes of almost all. Many lives were saved. The Fake News new narrative is disgraceful & false!" (Trump, 18 March 2020)

56. "I would like to begin by announcing some important developments in our war against the *Chinese virus*. We'll be invoking the defense production act just in case we need it." (Trump, 18 March 2020)

57. "We talked about this *China virus* – I think he's been pretty clear when they accused it of coming from – if I remember right – an American soldier, the President was unambiguous about pushing back against their propaganda." (Pompeo, March 2020)

58. "He never asked me to calm it down, no. Somebody might've spoken to somebody, but nobody spoke to me about it. I think it was time though, because I talk about the *Chinese virus*, and I mean it.... And this was the *Chinese virus*. But I don't have to say it if they feel so strongly about it. We'll see." (Trump, 26 March 2020)

59. "We have waged a fierce battle against the invisible enemy — the China virus," Mr. Trump said.

Not surprisingly, Trump made use of the metaphor with different lexicons such as "Chinese, China, Wuhan, and foreign virus" with the same intent to describe Covid-19 which cognitively evoking of embodied conceptualization of assigning responsibility for the existence of the virus, i.e. the term "Chinese virus" has large implications in moving from a scientifically-supported descriptive term to an accusative term. This highlights negative attitude that might be socially shared against China that based on racist ideology. Trump accesses to this metaphor to explain his complex facts about the origin of the virus and otherwise to defend his opinion and attitudes. Another way to understand the metaphor used by Trump and his officials is socially a way to persuade people that China occults animosity towards US and thus it will be a threat. Trump attempts to shape the world view through highlighting certain aspect of concepts.

Another metaphor used by US and China officials is *war metaphor* in order to shape public understanding as in:

60. "The world is at *war* with a *hidden enemy*. WE WILL WIN!" (Trump, 17 March 2020).

61. "We are waging *war* on this virus using every financial, scientific, medical, pharmaceutical and military resource to halt it's spread and protect our citizens." (Trump, 26 March 2020)

62. "We have waged a fierce *battle* against the *invisible enemy* — the China virus," Mr. Trump said.

63. "As we continue to wage all-out medical *war* to defeat the virus, we're also *fighting* an economic *war* to ensure we can quickly turn to full financial strength. We have to get our country back. We have to get going. Everybody wants to get going." (Pompeo, 17 March 2020).

64. "What we want to do is we want to make sure that they all stay together so that after *the war* is won, ... We're poised to do that, but we have to win *the war* first". (Trump, 18 March 2020)

65. "I think you'll see a very fast turnaround once we have a victory over the *hidden enemy*, as I say, it's a *hidden enemy*. Sometimes a *hidden enemy* is a lot tougher than somebody that stares you in the face, right?"

66. "We have to close down our country," and the entire world closed down because of this *hidden enemy*.

If every American continues to strictly adhere to social distancing guidelines, we can defeat *the invisible enemy* and ... that they haven't seen because of *the hidden enemy*, the virus".

67. "Ultimately, the goal is to ease the guidelines and open things up to very large sections of our country as we near the end of our *historic battle* with the *invisible enemy*. We're going for a while, but we'll win.

We are all in this together and we'll come through together. It's the *invisible enemy*. That's always the *toughest enemy*, *the invisible enemy*, but we are going to defeat *the invisible enemy*.... I call it *the unseen*, *the unseen enemy*, you call it. First responders and healthcare workers who have tragically lost their lives in the *fight* against the virus. It's *a vicious*, *vicious enemy*." (Trump, 22 March 2020)

68. "We must sacrifice together because we are all in this together and we'll come through together. It's the *invisible enemy*. That's always *the toughest enemy: the invisible enemy*. But we're going to defeat *the invisible enemy*. I think we're going to do it even faster than we thought. And it will be a complete victory." (Trump, 22 March 2020)

69. " It can happen. It's the *hidden enemy*. Remember that. It's the *hidden enemy*." (Trump, 22 March 2020)

70. "I call it the "*unseen*" -- *the unseen enemy*". (Trump, 22 March 2020)

The virus here is associated with different lexicons such as "invisible enemy", "unseen enemy", "toughest enemy", and "hidden enemy" as declared by Trump and his administer in their speeches on March. Later, it seems that he has settled to use "invisible enemy" which was repeated more than 50 times from March till Mid-April. Therefore, this requires to wage a war against an invisible enemy; thus, it is not a traditional war. He emphasised his reaction through the use of pronoun "we" and modal auxiliary "will" to express the ability which is very positive in terms of winning the war against this hidden enemy. Similarly, Pompeo used Trump's words as evidence of his knowledge which coincides with Trump's knowledge towards the virus which is regarded as a *foreign threat* that presupposes China's intention to spread the virus to US for purpose. This kind of knowledge that controls their mental models is that the virus is no less risk as the invisible enemy which might be understood as China. Therefore, this requires an official decision as a president to close the borders with China and as a savior to protect Americans' lives.

Repeatedly, the US high-level politicians make a reference to metaphor of *war* which presupposes that US is exposed to a war which they describe as a dangerous. Highlighting their attitudes about Americans being in risk, the US officials have utilised one type of *affect; in/security*. Thus, Trump used the adjective *dangerous* is an indication of negative *appreciation*.

Repetition is outstanding device that Trump used in his speeches. This is obviously appeared with the repetition of certain words, phrases, and clause as shown above. He insisted on the wining of the war and achieves victory because in his mental model that this war is not against the virus rather it is against China in order to prove for the international community that

USA is the great power ever. The parallelism in the repetition found in Trump's sentence "*We will win this battle, we will defeat this enemy, and we will rise from this present crisis with new strength, unity, and resolve and that's what's happening*" which presupposes indirectly that the virus has really affected US's strength and unity and creates a crisis inside US. What makes Trump distinguished from other leaders was his ability to dismiss the painful side of the "war" by focusing on the "victory" as shown below:

71. "America continues to mobilize every segment of our society to turn the tide in the battle against the virus. I want Americans to know that we will get through this challenge. The hardship will end; it will end soon. Normal life will return. And our economy will rebound very, very strongly. But, right now, in the midst of this great national trial, Americans must remain united in purpose and focused on victory." (Trump, 24 March 2020)

Many of these calls to action (combat the enemy) are followed by words in 'all-caps' to add emphasis.

72. "If every American continues to strictly adhere to social distancing guidelines, we can *defeat the invisible enemy* and save countless lives, and we can do it much more quickly."

Although this war is not an actual one, nevertheless, Trump represented himself as a wartime president. Thus, Trump's war is a metaphorical one in which series of entailments are created to complete this kind of metaphor i.e., war metaphor. Metaphors are conceptual devices that stimulate cognitive and policy responses to conform with the chosen metaphor. In order to fight enemy, Trump's metaphor entails soldiers who give collective sacrifice on the home front to achieve victory. By doing so, the war metaphor is completed and the entailments that he wanted from the hearer to adopt are offered. Positioning himself as a wartime president, Trump would fight until attain the victory; thus, he was confident that the end of struggling this virus is victory. In this war, he described his soldiers who are health workers and named them as heroes and brave who represented with a non-metaphorical frontline army and supply lines. Trump's ideology is revealed the dichotomy between US versus THEM in which he praised his team as the best team ever in the world in its preparation and resilient. This metaphorical army does not need people to be courageous rather hardworking.

Semantically, he confidently displayed his *esteem judgement* and to promised victory on March 22 stating,

73. "For those worried and afraid, please know: As long as I am your President, you can feel confident that you have a leader who will always fight for you, and I will not stop until we win. This will be a great *victory*. This is going to be a *victory*. And it's going to be a *victory* that, in my opinion, will happen much sooner than originally expected. It's now attacking -- the enemy is attacking 144 countries at this moment. One hundred and forty-four. That's *unthinkable*. There's never been anything like this. And it's vicious. It is vicious". (Trump, 22 March 2020)

The word 'victory' has been repeated three times in the above extracts. The use of repetition here is to emphasize his confidence in the elimination of the virus which will happen sooner than expected. Hereby, Trump made use of positive words to make the whole American society engaged and mobilized in the war against the invisible enemy. This enemy is

framed in Trump's speech as an aggressor although he did not name the nation-state of the aggressor thus it is undefinable. He described it as "vicious" which here indicates Trump's participation in the longstanding tradition of war in which the enemy is described as savage that causes destruction. However, Trump mentioned many times that a Chinese virus was the enemy thus, he associated the virus with the actor-state. This kind of association helps complete the war metaphor.

On the contrary of Trump, President Xi Jinping has little speeches in Media. In the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit on Covid-19 on 26 March 2020, he said

74. "From day one of our *fight* against the outbreak, we have put people's life and health first. ...What we *fought* was a *people's war against the outbreak*. We have put up a *strenuous struggle* and made *tremendous sacrifices*." (Xi Jinping, 26 March 2020)

75. "Major infectious *disease is the enemy of all*. ...We must comprehensively step up international cooperation and foster greater synergy so that humanity *as one could win the battle against such a major infectious disease*." (Xi Jinping, 26 March 2020)

76. "First, we need to be resolute in fighting an *all-out global war against the COVID-19 outbreak*". (Xi Jinping, 26 March 2020)

77. "Second, we need to make a collective response for control and treatment at the international level. This is a virus that respects no borders. *The outbreak we are battling is our common enemy*." (Xi Jinping, 26 March 2020)

78. "Going forward, while *combating* the disease at home, China will make contributions to the global *fight* against COVID-19. *Virus is an enemy* of all human beings as it knows no borders. China will work hand in hand with other countries and contribute our *strength and wisdom to securing a final victory* against the pandemic and to building a community with a shared future for mankind". (Geng Shuang, 12 March 2020)

79. "I would like to point out that the virus is the *common enemy* of mankind and the pandemic knows no borders." (Geng Shuang, 13 March 2020)

80. "Prime Minister Hun Sen visited China shortly after the outbreak to express confidence in and support for *China's victory* over the challenge. Cambodian people from all walks of life made financial and material donations to China as the Chinese people *fought an all-out war* against the virus". (Geng Shuang, 23 March 2020)

81. "President Xi Jinping attended this summit and put forward four propositions. First, we need to be resolute in *fighting an all-out global war against the COVID-19 outbreak*, and a G20 health ministers' meeting should be convened as quick as possible." (Geng Shuang, 27 March 2020)

The same metaphor of war was utilised by the Chinese Officials but with little wording. For example, the Chinese president was connected the pandemic to the war in which all people should cooperate to get rid of it. The lexicons associated to the virus expressing war metaphor as mentioned by the Chinese Officials are "battel, fight, combat, common enemy, global war, enemy, struggle and sacrifices". This wording shows obviously Chinese reaction toward the

virus as a global war that affected all countries worldwide. In this way, they expressed their common knowledge which was apart from their personal attitudes about the virus. They did not describe the virus as hidden or invisible as the American Officials did and this essentially reflected their mental representation of the state in which China did not consider US as an enemy in the same way that US explicitly stated. Additionally, the Chinese Officials evoked a sense of defender who wanted to save all people throughout the world through providing an aid to other countries in the globe. They called for global cooperation, wisdom and strength in order to obtain the final victory on the virus with reference to the modal "will" that indicates the near future. Thus, the Chinese Officials were hopefully appreciated the way to combat the virus in a positive way through the use adjectives "*strenuous*" and "*tremendous*" in "*We have put up a strenuous struggle and made tremendous sacrifices.*" The positive feeling of belief and seriousness to save people's lives as in "*China will work hand in hand with other countries and contribute our strength and wisdom to securing a final victory against the pandemic and to building a community with a shared future for mankind*" give a power to the description of the act to affect the recipients.

### **Conclusions**

The research provides thorough analysis of the major themes (topics) emerged across the analysed data on Covid-19 made by US and China officials; they are: conspiracy theory and mutual accusations, racism and stigmatization, and China's transparency and response to Covid-19. On March, politicians whether American or Chinese engaged in a war of words to prove the conspiracy theory that Covid-19 was spread by China from Wuhan city. This had a very impact on different scales of life such as economy, politics, and society. More importantly, the impact on individual scale especially the Asians who were stigmatized greatly with Trump and Pompeo's description of the virus as "Chinese virus" was shown more frequently in American speeches. The American officials were also more often found describing China as the responsible for the pandemic and accused its government for covering up the truth of the virus with presenting misinformation and not being transparent from the beginning. Trump was tactful in his language through choosing different and repeated lexicons\ reword of the virus for example, *China virus*, *Chinese virus*, *foreign virus*, *kung flu*, *invisible enemy*, *hidden enemy*, *unseen enemy*. Thus repetition as a rhetorical device is utilized more frequently in American speeches' attacking China particularly with reference to the origin of the virus and the accusation of China as the source. Meanwhile, the repetition in the Chinese speeches is used in a different way. It is used particularly by Geng Shuang in attacking the actors especially Pompeo who was underestimated by addressing him "this politician" which was repeatedly used. Also, Geng Shuang used rewording in the description of the actors such as *some US political figures*, *some in the US*, *some US politicians and senior officials* etc. Therefore, this way of description combines the common knowledge with ideologically based appraisals.

The American officials are more based on emotions to manipulate people's views such as the feeling of suffering that some people exposed to due to the pandemic and consequently it emphasizes the meanings of insecurity and unhappiness which they are associated with the negative attitudes that cause social harm. Those politicians appeared themselves as if they are the saviors of humanity through the positive feeling of belief and seriousness to save people's lives and to show care and conscientiousness in one's work or duties and also to give a power to the description of the act to affect the recipients. This positive attitude presupposes that

China is a threat and risk as US takes its responsibility to move its citizens to a safer place which is United States.

While Trump and Pompeo used war metaphor to describe COVID-19 largely with great emphasis on personalizing the enemy i.e., China from which the virus is originated. Differently, Chinese officials' use of the same metaphor reflects the unity and cooperation among China and other countries because they considered it as a global enemy. All leaders employed various types of emotional appeals to mobilise the public, but Trump and Pompeo used war metaphors and aggressive language with greater frequency than Chinese officials.

The analysis reveals additional evidence to the different messages given by the Chinese politicians to inspire the international community in general and citizens in particular to adhere to the social contract in the adoption of response and recovery measures. This research outlines the varied approaches the generally relate with stance and attitude and provide some context for how the used language by politicians may effect response. This means that their language is influenced by different factors such as social, economic, political and geographical contexts. In additional, the societal norms in which the public audience can expect something from the leaders also plays an important role in addressing the citizens in order to reach the efficiency of communication.

As for the ideological attitudes, it is found that each side used US versus Them dichotomy to express their stances. Trump and Pompeo used to criticize the Chinese officials through providing judgments with no solid evidence. This eventually reflects their mental model because they consider China as invisible enemy implicitly due to the conflict between these two countries to be the sole superpower in the world. Most of the attitudes highlighted in US speeches are connected to the accusation of China for the spread of the virus meanwhile the attitudes raised by the Chinese officials are dealt with overcoming of the virus leaving the source of the virus aside. Likewise, the Chinese officials' attitudes attempt to show for the international community how Trump's government was failed to control the situation. Therefore, the actors and the events are both described negatively for the fore and positively for the friends. They employed the positive and negative representation. Finally, both of those politicians failed to provide evidence for the origin of the virus which till now is kept mysterious also by WHO which is afraid of creating a great crisis in the world, although science said its word that the virus was not manmade nor genetically modified. Consequently, this crisis changed the globe and the public to have a new era of threat for being exposed to another war in any time between US and China due to their desire to be sovereignty and definitely people will be the victims at last.

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